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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
EXTENSION SERVICE
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NATIONAL 4-H CLUB WEEK

A Week of Rededication

Heads, Hearts, Hands, and Health to Victory

A Message to 4-H Members*

M. L. Wilson

Director of Extension Work

The record of the wartime achievements of you 4-H Club members since Pearl Harbor is an inspiring one. It had to be inspiring to match the record and achievements of young Americans on the battle front, including 800,000 former 4-H members. Surely, Tarawa, Saipan, Normandy, and Bastogne will forever stand as historic battles in the cause of human freedom.

Our fighting men know, as do the workers who make our weapons of war, that without the food you 4-H farm boys and girls helped produce, we would not be as far along in the war as we are today. The vegetables from your 400,000 acres of 4-H Victory Gardens and the crops from your fields helped to make it possible to bring vitamin-rich food to our servicemen in all corners of the world. The 33,000,000 birds you raised helped to bring chicken dinners to the fighting fronts. Many eggs from your 4-H flocks went to hungry children in liberated countries. Meat and milk from nearly 2,000,000 head of cattle, together with grains, peanuts, and fruit you 4-H members raised, helped to provide the food, including K rations, that our armed forces required.

I wish we knew how many paratroopers dropped to safety with parachutes made of materials you helped to produce; or the number of lives saved at sea with life belts containing milkweed floss that you collected; or how many extra acres were harvested because of farm machines you helped to operate or repair.

Credit for these 4-H achievements must go to each of you 1,700,000 members. A grateful nation also thanks your 200,000 volunteer leaders who helped you to make these records possible. Not all of the 4-H members now in the military services have shot down 40 Japanese planes, as has Maj. Richard I. Bong, a former 4-H member. Not all have received the Distinguished Flying Cross, like Capt. Harold Shull. Not all can be the ones to send a torpedo on its way toward Japanese convoys, or be at the head of a relief column liberating encircled comrades. But each of them, every 4-H soldier, whether in the kitchen, at the typewriter, on a truck, whether loading supplies or repairing a propeller, is doing his part toward the final Victory.

The job here at home may become just as monotonous and nonglamorous as do the everyday jobs in the Service. That extra pig you raise, the extra days you help your neighbor during harvest, the extra quarts you can from your

* This message will be available as a radio transcription for use during the week. Read it carefully for the inspiration it contains. It also highlights the significance of the contributions which farm boys and girls in 4-H Club work are making to the war effort.

Victory Garden, these are small items in themselves. But they add up to the fact that your slogan, "Feed a fighter or more in '44," became a reality of feeding more than 1 million soldiers for a full year.

Although we're making progress in the war, it is not yet won. The lines of lonely white crosses are growing longer every day. The hospitals equipped with the beds and bandages you helped provide are filling up. The ambulances you bought with your war bonds of mercy are shuttling back and forth from front-line fire more often and with larger loads.

More young men, many of whom will be your brothers, or your friends or neighbors, will be called to fill the growing need of the battle fronts. Most of the eggs, the vegetables, the grains, the fruit, and the meat produced last year will vanish in 1945. Food, like ammunition, is used up in huge quantities. It vanishes not only on the offensives staged in the air, on the sea, and on the land, but also on the production fronts in the factories and forts right here at home. The letters written in '44 will not boost morale in '45. And the paper gathered and the scrap collected in '44 will not provide the materials needed in '46. The blood donated in '44 will not last through '45. No, what was done last year needs to be repeated this year in ever-increasing quantity.

Now, let's see what's ahead for the 4-H year of 1945. We all are proud of the record made by you 4-H members in '44. This record gives noble assurance that you, the rural youth of America, are ready to move forward in full measure with the task ahead. Your 4-H youth have learned that you can work better and accomplish more through teamwork. That's why every rural young man and young woman under 21 years of age should join a 4-H Club. The science of production can help make our efforts count for more. 4-H Club work means emphasis on producing and saving what is needed most by the best methods science and experience can provide. That is why 4-H Club work, carried on by the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and the State agricultural colleges, has been a help in the great progress that wartime production has made.

Though winning the war is our number 1 job for 1945, I know you 4-H members and leaders are not overlooking the aims our soldiers are fighting for-- a home, a good neighborhood, a thriving community, a chance for a good education, and freedom of worship in one's own way. That's why Victory is everybody's business now. That's why 4-H Club members welcome every rural boy and girl who wants to join in the 4-H Victory program.

The job ahead calls for the full use of everyone's resources. We must use our head to think clearly of what we can do best and how to do it best-- to plan with others how every boy and girl in the neighborhood can do his or her part. Our hearts must be dedicated to an unfailing loyalty to the principles of freedom, of tolerance, and of peace on earth. It will be a gigantic task. It can be done with the spirit which our rural youth, through the 4-H Clubs, has manifested in each of the years since the war began.

This year manpower and womanpower, boypower and girlpower, will be more important than ever before. Therefore, "Keep fit from head to foot" should be the slogan for us all. The battle for production; the canvass for salvage; the drives for War Bonds; the harvests from Victory Gardens; the campaigns for conservation -- in fact, our whole home front mission will fall short unless we keep ourselves healthy and strong. We cannot dig for Victory without full health of body and mind.

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Beyond the devastation of war, and the victory of right which must win over might, our Nation is preparing for the job ahead. It will need clear-headed, strong, and healthy citizens capable of leadership. That's why National 4-H Club Week is so very important to every rural American neighborhood. That's why I'm confident that our boys and girls overseas will be brought home sooner if every rural boy and girl enrolls in 4-H Club work and dedicates himself, or herself, to "Heads, Hearts, Hands, and Health to Victory."

